

# Soviet Harassment Of Americans Reflects New Flowering Of Arrogance

Adm. Stansfield Turner, U.S. director of central intelligence, pointed out several signs of continuing Soviet pressure against the United States in an exclusive interview with editors of The San Diego Union.

Turner's comments focused on the latest incidents of Soviet harassment of American reporters and businessmen in Moscow, the discovery of a KGB tunnel into the American Embassy and harsh prison sentences given in the latest trials of dissidents. He called the harassment of Americans an apparent response to the U.S. arrest of two Russians caught spying in this country.

The CIA director also expressed concern about what or who may be behind what he described as continuing efforts to undercut America's intelligence gathering services. He included former CIA agent Philip Agee's threat to reveal the identities of as many overseas CIA agents as he can, saying that such a disclosure would jeopardize the lives of these agents, as well as seriously damage U.S. ability to collect needed intelligence data. The interview follows:



"I don't really believe there's a way to speculate in a very informed manner as to whether they (the Soviets) will be tougher or less cooperative."

**Question:** Admiral, why is the Soviet Union harassing American businessmen and newspaper people in Moscow?

**Answer:** The Soviets have taken these unconscionable actions apparently in retaliation for the perfectly proper arrest of two Soviet spies who were caught in the process of spying in this country.

**Q:** What is the relationship of what's happening there to detente as a whole?

**A:** I think you have to recognize that detente has never meant that there is no competition between our countries. It has tried to dampen the military element of that competition there are bound to be ups and downs in the relationships over periods of time. I don't view this particular series of events as a major impact on detente.

**Q:** Is the KGB being more arrogant or more open?

**A:** When we discover a tunnel that the KGB has dug into the United States Embassy in Moscow and they file the protest with us, they're damned arrogant.

**Q:** What should the United States response be?

**A:** That's a question for the Secretary of State and the President.

**Q:** Do you think the trials of dissidents are going to result in harsher sentences because of the worldwide attention than otherwise would have been the case?

**A:** I think that it is very difficult to speculate on what the legal processes in the Soviet Union might do or might not do. They are certainly carefully controlled, as contrasted with our country. I don't read the sentencing of Shcharansky, for instance, as having been terribly influenced by the publicity. I think perhaps the fact that he was brought to trial was a rejoinder to the public criticism; they were showing that they were not going to let the public criticism completely control their internal domestic activities as they see them.

**Q:** Do you think the Russians will be more tough as the Soviet leadership changes and Brezhnev disappears?

**A:** That's a real sixty-four dollar question. And I don't really believe there's a way to speculate in a very informed manner as to whether they will be tougher or less cooperative. Brezhnev clearly has been one of the leading exponents of detente and of SALT, so one has to be concerned whether with the loss of his influence there will be as much emphasis on those.

**Q:** Phillip Agee, the renegade CIA agent, recently announced his intentions of exposing every CIA agent abroad. How much of a danger do you regard this as being?

**A:** A very serious one and one that I can do very little about. I'd like to see you do something about it. I'm not allowed to investigate Americans, quite properly, but I'd like to

lay before you the question for a good investigative reporter. What is going on here? We've got Agee pub-

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lishing a very smooth, expensive but free distribution publication strictly against the CIA. We've got a world youth festival in Havana with Agee on the forum and others who have been brought down for that purpose. We've got other activities in this country directly pointed at undercutting our intelligence activities. They are not cheap; somebody's behind this, somebody's funding this and moving it. I think it's insidious, but within the limits of the law I have no authority to go out and try to either find out who's doing it or to curb it.

**Q:** In your reports to the State Department and to the President, I assume you warned of this danger that you are talking about. Is there anything our government can do in a formal way to draw attention to this problem?

**A:** Rather little, in view of the fact that Agee is unwilling to come back to this country and come under our legal jurisdiction. Even then there are severe inhibitions on what we can do without some questions whether he has broken the law or whether he has not. We have been attempting in many ways over the last year or so to tighten our overall security procedures; the trial of Frank Snepp for violating his secrecy agreement with the Central Intelligence Agency was in part to indicate our government's strong concern with these unauthorized releases.

**Q:** Could you outline the damage caused by unauthorized release of CIA secrets?

**A:** The long term damage to our country is that people who are willing to work with us and support us overseas, individuals or foreign government agencies, are losing their sense of confidence that a relationship with us can be kept confidential. Therefore, to some extent our sources of vital information can be dried up by this process. Some of the factual data released is also injurious. We've had specific complaints from people whose interests were gored by these releases.

**Q:** Frank Snepp maintains that he decided to write his book only after he could find no one within the CIA management who was willing to hear his complaints on the American withdrawal from Vietnam or to even admit that there were mistakes made by the CIA. What is your assessment of this?

**A:** Snepp's allegation is basically untrue. He had opportunities to get a hearing. He did get some hearing before he left, he raised some complaints. They weren't that well founded, in the agency's view at the time. On top of that, we have an Intelligence Oversight Board to which he could have gone with his complaint; or he could have gone to Congress. He came to see me personally and I gave him my assurance that I wanted to find out what was wrong. He lied to me in saying that he was going to give me his book to review before he published it.

**Q:** Snepp maintains that literally thousands of pacification program employees were left behind — men whose very lives may have depended on their getting out of Vietnam with the Americans. Could you comment?

**A:** I have not really probed into the details of how the CIA performed back then, but my view was that it was not all done as perfectly as it could be. But it was not a case of gross negligence, as Snepp alleges. There were a lot of mistakes made in Vietnam by the military, by the CIA, by others, but I think Snepp did not have a big enough view of the problem when he was there and has focused his criticism on a small part of it.

**Q:** Getting back to the long term threat to intelligence gathering posed by the release of names of agents and contacts overseas; could you tell me how you're dealing with it and what, in your view, the future is for the safety of your contacts and your agents overseas?

**A:** We're being as scrupulous as we can in protecting their identities and refusing to respond to media inquiries about them. Sometimes this is very difficult because you're taking a brickbat that you don't deserve, but you've got to. It runs into difficult legal issues when you prosecute a case that might disclose some other activities or some other agents that were not even the primary subject of the case. That's one reason, incidentally, that it was very helpful to take Snepp to court on a non-criminal charge, not a violation of secrecy — on a contractual issue, we didn't have to reveal a lot of secret information in order to prove that there was other secret information released.

**Q:** The handling of the Snepp case has troubled a lot of journalists and journalism professional groups in that it's being interpreted as a gag against writing of any sort about governmental service. Could you deal with that problem?

**A:** Mr. Snepp had signed an agreement as a condition of his employment with us. It's a voluntary thing. If you don't want to sign one, you don't have to, but you don't have to work for us either. And all it restricts him on in the future is his handling of information gained during his period of service with us. If he wants to go out and write about what's going on in the Department of

Labor since he left us, there's no control over that. In point of fact, there's no control over what he writes in his book. It's only that he must submit it to us for prior clearance. If we say he should take something out and he insists not, then we have to go through legal procedures in which we get an injunction and the courts decide whether or not we're correct. We have no arbitrary authority to prevent him from printing anything.

**Q:** What is your view of Soviet military intentions at this point, vis a vis are they going to be satisfied with arms parity or are they just interested in superiority across the board? Also, are you satisfied that the CIA has adequate sources of information so that the view that you give the President about the Soviet Union's military position is accurate?

**A:** No intelligence officer ever feels that he's got enough information. I would answer your question, though in saying yes, I think we have a very good concept of the Soviet military strength in almost all fields. Clearly, we always would like to have more detail in the area where it is obviously most difficult — intentions. It's a lot easier to count missiles than it is to know what the purpose in their thinking is for having them. I think the basic intention of the Soviet Union is to compete with the United States. When you look at the assets that they have to do that they don't have the economic wherewithal, they don't have the political entree and acumen that we do, so they have resorted to competing in an area where they have almost unlimited potential over time, and that's the military. Whether that means that they are determined to be so far ahead of us that they could possibly take us on in a military conflict is a different question. I don't think that's very likely. I think they hope they can achieve their objectives by less than military means. But I think that as long as they feel they need the leverage of military strength, they are going to continue trying to use it, and how far they will go in matching or exceeding our military capabilities will very largely depend on the resolve and the military response of the Western nations.



**Q: Do you think they are driving for superiority?**

**A:** I don't really want to answer that question that starkly because it is easy to be misunderstood. I think they are driving for a strong enough military position and enough perception around the world of their military strength that they will gain political advantage from it. They have over the last ten years gotten tremendous mileage out of a smaller, less capable force because they were coming from nowhere and challenging us.

**Q: What's happening in Cambodia today?**

**A:** Cambodia is a pawn here between the aspirations of the Vietnamese to be the dominant power in Indochina and the position of the Chinese not wanting to see an expansion of Vietnamese authority in that area. Cambodians have a very strange political regime that's very repressive and is causing problems on both of its borders to the west in Thailand and to the east in Vietnam. I think it's part of the overall settling of the political relationships in that area.

**Q: Admiral, is there a kind of battle in the administration over who will run the overall intelligence programs in the United States, the CIA, the DIA or any number of other military intelligence agencies?**

**A:** There's no battle. The President on Jan. 25 of this year in a new executive order laid out exactly how it was to be done and I've seen no resistance to it since he signed that. The President decreed that I would be in charge of all the budgets of the national intelligence activities. I would also be in charge of what we call tasking all of the national intelligence assets, telling them what information they are to collect. But he did not put me in charge of the interpretation, the analysis of the information collected. We want competing analysis but we don't want a lot of competition — three spies going to the same place to do the same thing, or two expensive collection systems that overlap unnecessarily.

**Q: Criticism of U.S. intelligence support arose over the Cuban role in the Katangan invasion of Zaire. One was, that CIA intelligence was faulty; two, was that CIA intelligence was misused; and three, was that you and the President don't talk to each other often enough. Are any of these correct?**

**A:** I talk to the President once a week at least. That is, I have a scheduled appointment with him once a week, and I think that's often enough, plus such ad hoc things as Cabinet meetings.

**Q: But he didn't know, for example, that you were testifying in a congressional committee, as I recall.**

**A:** No, that isn't it. He didn't know I went to see Senator Clark on a related matter. I was directed by the National Security Council to go see Senator Clark because we were laying out for the President all the alternatives he had. One of them could have involved the Clark amendment. We needed a first hand interpretation of what the amendment meant before we decided on the alternative to present to the President. On the Katangan situation, I was daily supplying the President with written briefings which included Katanga. I believe that the record will show that there was no conflict between my briefings to him and what he was saying in the public forum.

**Q:** Several weeks ago one of your predecessors, Mr. Colby, said in a speech, that he felt that because of the tremendous poverty in Mexico and the doubling of population there in the next 20 or so years, that Mexico represents a potentially tremendous threat to the security of our country. How do you feel about that?

**A:** I hadn't heard that Bill had put it in those terms, but it's very indicative of one of the changes, the challenges that we face in the intelligence organizations of our country today. We have to deal not only with Soviet missile threat, we have to deal with population, immigration, natural resources exchange problems between us and a country as close to us as Mexico. Clearly, the illegal immigration problem between us and Mexico is a very important one that you here in San Diego are much closer to than most of us. And we have to hope that we can work out ways such that with the growing affluence of the Mexican economy through its oil and gas finds that they will be able to channel those resources into ways that will prevent this immigration from being necessary. I don't view it in quite as cataclysmic terms as Bill, but I certainly think that we have to be very alert to working with the Mexicans to solve these problems amicably and I think that President Carter has particularly made an effort to work closely with President Lopez Portillo.

**Q:** Who's in charge of counter-intelligence program along the Mexican-American borders, the CIA or the FBI?

**A:** The CIA conducts counter-intelligence outside the United States, the FBI inside the United States.



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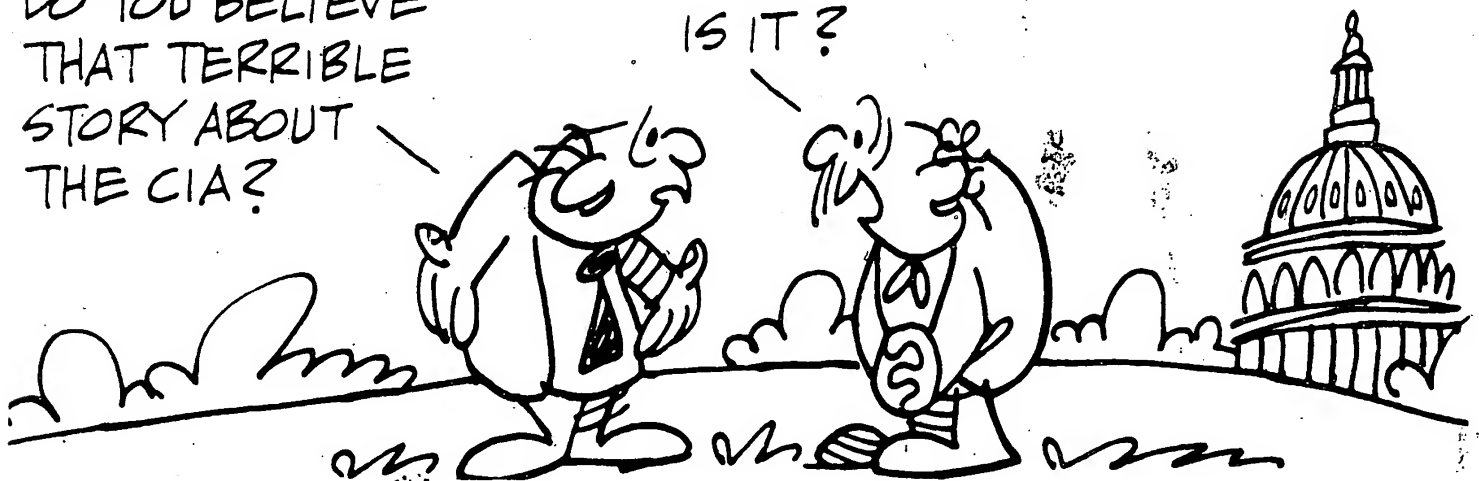


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**by brickman**

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